



Plymouth Historical Society Board Members in front of the mural wall are, from left: Lillian Caffrey, Helen Youells, James Youells, Joseph Slusser, Sandra Lee, and Patrick Smith.

Earth Conservancy donates to Avondale Mine mural

By Bill O'Boyle  
boboyle@timesleader.com

PLYMOUTH — Terry Ostrowski, president and CEO of Earth Conservancy, recently presented a check for \$13,585 to the Plymouth Historical Society to help pay for the painting of the Avondale Mine mural.

“We’re really proud to support the Plymouth Historical Society’s mural project commemorating the Avondale Mine Disaster,” Ostrowski said. “We have long ties connecting us to both the Avondale colliery and the society, and this advances our shared mission to recognize and preserve our region’s coal mining history. The mural will be a powerful way to remember those who died and honor everyone who helped shape this community.”

On Sept. 6, 1869, 108 miners, including men and boys, lost their lives in what is known as the worst mining disaster in history — the Avondale Mine fire. Two additional men perished trying to rescue them.

The Plymouth Historical Society started a fundraiser to install a mural at the mine site off Route 11 to honor those who died.



The Earth Conservancy recently presented a check for \$13,585 for the painting of the Avondale Mine mural. From left: Helen Youells, Jim Youells, Plymouth Historical Society President Joe Slusser, Chris Pagoda, Peg Makos, Pat Smith, Earth Conservancy President and CEO Terry Ostrowski, and artist Joel Jones.

The Plymouth Historical Society chose artist Joel Carson Jones to create and install the mural. Jones has established an international reputation for his Still Life, Trompe L’oeil paintings, and mural works.

In 2008, Jones was granted the title of Living Master by the International Art Renewal Center. Jones has had exhibitions of his work held all over the United States and Spain.

The mural is estimated to cost \$15,000.

Ostrowski said the property was originally owned by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western (DL&W) railroad, which owned the Avondale Colliery when the 1869 fire occurred. He said the Glen Alden Coal Company, and then the Blue Coal Corporation owned it until Earth Conservancy’s purchase of the land in 1994.

In 2014, Earth Conser-

vancy donated more than 4 acres of the DL&W land to the Plymouth Historical Society. The parcel included part of the old colliery and the Avondale No. 1 shaft.

Since then, the Society has done a remarkable job in preserving the site and transforming it into a memorial for the 108 workers who died in the fire.

Reach Bill O’Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on Twitter @TLBillOBoyle.

Remembering Grandma Trubisky’s honey jar

By Pat Korb  
Guest Columnist

When I think of Christmas and tradition, I fondly think of Grandma Trubisky and her honey jar.

When I was a youngster, we spent every Christmas Eve at my grandparents’ Ohio home. As soon as you walked in, Grandma brought her honey jar and gave you a Christmas blessing by “painting” the sign of the cross on your forehead with the honey. Now, it wasn’t just a little dab, but one very generous helping “to last the night.”

As the evening progressed in this little house with a lot of family, it got hotter, and that honey would slowly start dripping down your forehead between your eyes. We youngsters would always wipe it off when grandma “had her back turned,” and the grownups would just shake their heads and grin.

They had already learned that “somehow” Grandma knew as soon as that honey got wiped away. Then back she had come, jar in hand, to bless you once again. You could never avoid the honey blessing because she kept an accurate count in her head and never forgot anyone.

Eventually, you learned, let it drip, and just enjoy the rest of the evening at that kitchen table, celebrating the birth of The Baby. There was straw under the table to remind us of the Baby’s humble beginnings, and Grandpa began the meal with a looong Slovak Prayer. At that time, we observed a strict holiday fast of no meat or dairy products. We spent hours at the dinner table, the grownups singing Slovak Christmas carols as we kids sang a few in English.

We usually left by midnight, not because Santa was coming, but so we could get up early for



Grandma Mary Trubisky.

the even more important event of Christmas Mass the next morning at 8 a.m.

Our grandparents or parents are no longer with us, and the rest of us are scattered across the country, so we no longer have this celebration. However, I know the blessing goes on. I know that ever since she

arrived, my Grandma Mary is standing right there, next to Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates. And — I can assure you that nobody, but nobody, is getting in without The Blessing (doesn’t matter your religion — Mary doesn’t care). She is there, I know, jar in hand, doing her work for the Lord.

LOTTERY

**Midday Drawing**  
Pick 2: 2-2  
Pick 3: 2-0-0  
Pick 4: 6-6-7-9  
Pick 5: 9-9-1-2-6  
Wild: 2  
Treasure Hunt: 03-06-08-16-18

**Evening Drawing**  
Pick 2: 5-3  
Pick 3: 4-6-7  
Pick 4: 1-1-7-1  
Pick 5: 1-9-3-5  
Wild: 9  
Cash 5: 05-07-08-37-38  
Match 6: 10-13-22-31-35-45  
Cash4Life: 14-24-26-42-45  
Cash Ball: 04



Bill O’Boyle

Beyond the Byline

Santa hopes to bring these gifts

WILKES-BARRE — It’s almost Christmas Eve, and with any luck, Santa will arrive while every good little boy and girl is asleep.

My pal, Mike Harper, of Sharper Embroidery in Swoyersville, asks if anyone knows the name of Santa’s 10th reindeer?

We all know Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and, of course, Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer. So who is the 10th reindeer?

Harper offers, “Olive.” As in, “Olive, the other reindeer, used to laugh and call him names.”

OK, so Santa will try to leave everything on everybody’s list under their tree — that is, everybody who actually has been good, not naughty!

But just in case, here are a few gifts Santa might not leave, but perhaps should:

- Pauline Bailey (mother of Phylicia Thomas) — For her daughter’s case to be closed — to find out what happened, who all are responsible and to find her remains and bring her home. It’s been almost 22 years. Closure is all Pauline asks for, and she deserves it.
- Wilkes-Barre Mayor George Brown — Keep bringing people downtown to events like the Farmers Market, Fine Arts Fiesta, Downtown concerts and development; more shows at the F.M. Kirby Center; continued great services — police, fire, DPW.
- Luzerne County Manager Romilda Crocamo — A World Series championship for her beloved Yankees — and Brian Cashman’s cell number to offer guidance.
- Will Beekman — To call Carol King and convince her to appear in Wilkes-Barre — with Bob Dylan and James Taylor. And more success for his kids’ softball teams and, of course, the RailRiders.
- Joell Yarmel, F.M. Kirby Center: Continue to bring big-name acts and sell-out crowds to the “Jewel of the City.”
- Luzerne County Arts and Entertainment Hall of Fame: It’s been three years and three awesome induction classes — the fourth should also be great! Bravo!
- Joe Nardone Sr.: More oysters at Kevin’s. More oldies concerts that bring back memories for so many.
- Alan K. Stout: More visitors, more events, more good things! Donnie Baseball in Yankee pinstripes as manager and Derek Jeter as GM.
- King’s College President Thomas Looney and Wilkes U. President Greg Cant: To be true to their mission of educating the people of our

region who desire access to quality higher education and to strengthen the entire campus community — and higher enrollment.

- Luzerne County Community College President John Yudichak — To continue growing LCCC by offering students more quality programs at an affordable cost and expanding opportunities for high school students, creating partnerships with regional business and industry for student learning internships. And to keep listening to his dad, Joe.
- All veterans — To continue getting the utmost respect and admiration from a forever grateful nation. Thank you all for your service!
- Luzerne County Council — To work together for the betterment of the county and its hard-working people.
- Wilkes-Barre City Council — Same here, to effect positive change for the city and its residents and visitors.
- Chamber President Lindsay Griffin-Boylan — Continue her outstanding leadership with a great team, and they will convince major employers that pay family-sustaining wages to locate in NEPA.
- Diamond City Executive Director Larry Newman — To keep the plan moving forward in the downtown and for more downtown businesses to open in available spaces — and key corners in the City to see buildings built in 2026.
- Downtown Wilkes-Barre Business Association Chairman John Maday — Increased membership in the Downtown Wilkes-Barre Business Association, his own Viking boat, and an invite to lunch with him, the Easter Bunny, and Santa Claus — at the same time!
- Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport: Another vital part of the region’s economy, we hope for more flights, great rates, and continued solid leadership.
- Lou Barletta — A World Championship for the Yankees, a good cigar, and more time with family, and to continue to speak out on critical issues.
- Clancy Harrison: To continue helping people through her Food Dignity Movement program.
- Melissa Obuch: Ditto with her Mama-Bird program.
- U.S. Rep. Rob Bresnahan — To secure large amounts of federal dollars for Northeast Pennsylvania.
- U.S. Rep. Dan Meuser — To continue to make a positive impact in Washington, D.C., and to secure funding for NEPA.